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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/45/751)]

45/100. Humanitarian assistance to victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 43/131 of 8 December 1988,

Recalling that one of the principles of the United Nations is to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion,

Reaffirming the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States, and recognizing that it is up to each State first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations occurring on its territory,

Deeply concerned about the suffering of the victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations, the loss in human lives, the destruction of property and the mass displacement of populations that results from them,

Concerned about the fate of persons who, following such displacement, are in an extremely precarious situation, particularly in a country other than that of which they are nationals,

Considering that the abandonment of the victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations without humanitarian assistance constitutes a threat to human life and an offence to human dignity,

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Strongly desiring that the international community should respond speedily and effectively to the needs for emergency humanitarian assistance expressed in particular through the Secretary-General,

Concerned about the difficulties and obstacles that victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations may encounter in receiving humanitarian assistance,

Convinced that, in providing humanitarian assistance, in particular the supply of food, medicines or health care, for which access to victims is essential, rapid relief will avoid a tragic increase in the number of victims,

Recalling, in this regard, the Cairo Declaration 1/ adopted by the World Food Council at its fifteenth session, proposing, inter alia, an international agreement on the transport of emergency food aid,

Aware that alongside the action of Governments and intergovernmental organizations, the speed and efficiency of this assistance often depend on the help and aid of local and non-governmental organizations working in an impartial manner and with strictly humanitarian motives,

Reaffirming the need for the intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations dealing with humanitarian assistance to co-operate as closely as possible with the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator or any ad hoc mechanism set up by the Secretary-General in the co-ordination of aid,

Concerned about the effectiveness of such assistance, which requires an accurate evaluation of needs, efficient preparation of actions and effective co-ordination in conducting them,

Recalling that, in the event of natural disasters and similar emergency situations, the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality must be given utmost consideration by all those involved in providing humanitarian assistance,

1. Reaffirms the cardinal importance of humanitarian assistance for the victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations;

2. Reaffirms also the sovereignty of affected States and their primary role in the initiation, organization, co-ordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within their respective territories;

3. Stresses the important contribution made in providing humanitarian assistance by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations working impartially and with strictly humanitarian motives;

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/44/19), part one.

4. Invites all States whose populations are in need of such assistance to facilitate the work of these organizations in implementing humanitarian assistance, in particular the supply of food, medicines and health care, for which access to victims is essential;

5. Appeals, therefore, to all States to give their support to these organizations working to provide humanitarian assistance, where needed, to the victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations;

6. Notes with satisfaction the report of the Secretary-General 2/ on the implementation of resolution 43/131 and the suggestions which he makes concerning means of facilitating humanitarian assistance operations, in particular the possibility of establishing, on a temporary basis, where needed, and by means of concerted action by affected Governments and the Governments and intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned, relief corridors for the distribution of emergency medical and food aid;

7. Urges States in proximity to areas of natural disasters and similar emergency situations, particularly in the case of regions that are difficult to reach, to participate closely with the affected countries in international efforts with a view to facilitating, to the extent possible, the transit of humanitarian assistance;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to pursue, within existing resources, the necessary consultations with Governments and intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations with a view to determining means of facilitating the delivery of appropriate humanitarian assistance to the victims of natural disasters or similar emergency situations, including the establishment of relief corridors, on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General and on the terms set out in paragraph 6 of the present resolution, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session;

9. Invites the Secretary-General to study, within existing resources, the possibility of preparing, on the basis of information furnished by Governments and the relevant governmental and non-governmental international organizations and taking into account the work already done in this area by the United Nations, in particular by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, an indicative list of persons and bodies with expert knowledge of the delivery and management of emergency humanitarian assistance whom the United Nations could call upon, with the consent of the States concerned, to make an accurate and speedy assessment of the needs and a realistic determination of the best means of delivering the aid;

10. Decides to consider this question at its forty-seventh session.

68th plenary meeting
14 December 1990

2/ A/45/587.